

Congregational Responses to Mary and Jesus in the Garden Painting by Darren Morris



For the worship service on April 19, 2009, we used a painting by the artist Darren Morris of Mary and Jesus in the garden. The picture illustrated the preaching text of John 20:1-18. During worship we asked people to respond to the painting by writing a note on the back of the bulletin and leaving it in a basket when they left. Those responses were collated and have been sent to Mr. Morris who is an inmate at the prison in Portage. If you would be interested in reading a sample of the more than 60 comments, they are posted below.

Jerry Hancock

Select group of responses:

How wonderful to have YOU in worship with your painting. God always has surprises!

This is a great painting. Teaches us to move from the ordinary to venture into the extraordinary. Sometimes we look for Jesus in places we think we will find Him but that's not where He is. We need the spirit of God to guide us to where we can find Jesus, as we serve Him in diverse ways.

Thank you for this striking painting on the cover of our bulletin. Before service, I viewed it at length and reflected upon its contemporary significance. Rev. Hancock's moving sermon was an added dimension of inspiration using your painting as a focal point.

Thank you for sharing your painting with all of us at First Congregational Church. What a wonderful way for you to contribute and share the service with us. Blessings and peace.

The painting and Jerry's sermon about surprise and God's love brought me to tears. I liked the painting for its color, but more for a non-white Jesus and Mary. The Gospel must be removed from the white world.

Many thanks for sharing your beautiful art with the church. it is a very revealing scene and captures the moment as I imagine.

Thank you for bringing the mystery of this event so clearly—and so joyfully—to us.

This morning, Pastor Jerry wore a special stole from Kente cloth, a gift from one of our church families. I think the cloth may come from Ghana or nearby. Do you know what? The colors are bright, like your colors on Jesus and Mary in your painting—red, yellow, green, some blue and black. Very cool! Thank you for your beautiful artwork!

Thank you SO much for sharing your talents with us! What a joy to have you “with” us today. As a fellow artist, I'm totally taken by your sense of color and design, your grasp of perspective and the clear message conveyed. You truly have a gift and I'm so thrilled that your incarceration has not been an obstacle to your talent.